

A house divided can prove costly



Porch light over separate door led to live-ins.



Cooking-for-one clues: hot plate, microwave.

BY RICHARD YAGER

Trying to house your in-laws — or the friend of a friend who must live alone?

If you've set up your single-family home to do so, you could get fined. A Team Metro citation could cost you \$500, even the first time around.

Uncovering illegal use of single-family homes is a continuing compliance issue, according to Kendall Team Metro supervisor Catherine Minnis and compliance officer Edwin Rivera who confirms 235 cases reported since October 2004.

"Residential property values, taxes and insurance rates have risen in recent years but salary increases haven't kept pace with escalating costs for single-family homes," Minnis explained. If that accommodation "physically subdivides a single-family home, it's a violation of the county zoning code, leading to action against the property owner."

"It's illegal to create a separate living unit or apartment within the home, a garage or a detached utility building," she advised. "It's our job to educate the public about the code restrictions."

Team Metro compliance officers watch for verifiable signs, such as two or

more electrical utility meters installed on a home exterior; twin mailboxes on the premises, remodeling of a residence that creates an enclosure or extension, multiple doors and parking spaces, entry display of differing house numbers — even classified advertising offering a private room rental in a neighborhood zoned for single-family homes.

Should a violation be observed or reported by a neighbor, a courtesy warning notice is issued, allowing 15 days to correct the situation, Minnis said.

"If not corrected during the warning period, a \$500 citation will be issued to

the property owner."

Due process will allow the owner to appeal a citation and voice concerns through a Special Masters Hearing process. However, if a cited violation continues, a lien can be exercised against the property, she added.

"The problem is overcrowding, when a concentration of violations creates a higher density, adding to traffic and county services," she said. "Single-family owners pay for and have the right to enjoy surroundings for private homes, not for apartments."

(Photos furnished by Team Metro Kendall)



Glassed-in side door aroused suspicion



Bedroom mess was boarder's clutter.